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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 002836

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EAID](#) [KDEM](#) [KE](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: PRC/AFRICA: KENYAN AMBASSADOR SEES PRACTICAL AID
FROM CHINA, LACK OF ATTENTION FROM U.S.

REF: BEIJING 1050

Classified By: Regional Unit Chief Mark Lambert. Reasons 1.4 (B/D).

¶1. (C) Summary: While the United States and other Western countries focus on human rights and capacity building in Africa, China takes a more pragmatic and realistic approach to African aid, according to Kenya's Ambassador to the PRC. Kenyans feel that their positive attitudes toward the United States were unreciprocated, the Ambassador said. On the 2007 post-election violence and the subsequent power-sharing agreement between President Kibaki and Prime Minister Odinga, the Ambassador stated that no clear metrics exist to gauge the agreement's effectiveness and that the collaborative government's success will be determined by its ability to maintain long-term peace and hold elections in 2012. End Summary.

Kenyans Discouraged by Lack of Attention from U.S.

¶2. (C) Kenyan Ambassador to the PRC Ole Sunkuli told PolOff September 26 that Kenya "loves America, but America does not love us back." Speaking nostalgically of President John F. Kennedy and the "air lift" exchanges of the 1960s that brought many Kenyan students to study in the United States, Sunkuli lamented that tangible U.S. aid to, and interest in, his country had dropped off after the Cold War. President Obama's decision to visit Ghana instead of Kenya during his first official trip to Africa suggested to Kenyans that President Obama had intentionally distanced himself from Kenya and his Kenyan roots. Many Kenyans were "very disappointed" by President Obama's actions, Sunkuli asserted.

PRC: Not Just a Rebound Relationship from the U.S.

¶3. (C) Although Kenya and China have had formal relations for the past 46 years, "real friendship" between the two countries had only developed in recent years, according to Sunkuli, coinciding with Kenya's falling out of favor with the United States. Kenya appreciated China's pragmatic approach to aid in Africa. While the United States and other Western countries focused on human rights and capacity building, the PRC provided tangible assistance to areas where it was most needed. Ambassador Sunkuli commented that under Western countries' foreign assistance approach, aid was funneled primarily to international NGOs in Kenya. "Just when one target is met, three new ones are set," and in the end Kenya never received anything because it could never comply with the constantly changing conditionalities to aid. In comparison, China had come to Kenya and said "we will build you a road, and before we knew it the road was there," which is the kind of assistance "a Kenyan can touch and feel," Sunkuli concluded. This echoes similar comments Sunkuli made to EmbOffs earlier this year (reftel).

Jilted in the End?

¶4. (C) While enthusiastic about China's current assistance to Kenya, Sunkuli was less certain of the long-term potential of bilateral ties. He acknowledged that while the current relationship with the PRC was "win-win," he did not think ties would remain strong "after China becomes a super power."

"China might leave us eventually, just like the United States did," said Sunkuli. Recently, however, Kenya and China had increased cultural and educational exchanges that promoted understanding of the two different cultures. According to Sunkuli, China had adopted the cultural exchange format pioneered by the United States with the mobilization of its own Peace Corps-style volunteers throughout Kenya. Many of the Chinese college graduate volunteers taught agricultural techniques in rural Kenya. PRC-sponsored universities sponsored scholarships for Kenyans to study in China, and the number of recipients had doubled from 100 to 200 in the past year.

Post-Election Violence Came as a Surprise

¶5. (C) Commenting on the post-election violence that gripped Kenya after the December 2007 presidential elections, Sunkuli, a political appointee who identified himself with the Kenyan Africa National Union and was a cabinet member under former President Daniel Arap-Moi's administration until 2002, said that he had been "shocked" by the post-election turmoil and that "no one in Kenya had expected it." As to the sustainability of the power-sharing agreement between President Kibaki and Prime Minister Odinga, Sunkuli stated that no clear metrics existed to gauge the agreement's

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effectiveness. He suggested that the collaborative government's success would be determined by its ability to maintain long-term peace and hold elections in 2012.
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